

Point of View

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United Church of Christ • Commission for Racial Justice

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

THE TRUTH IS REVEALED IN SOUTH AFRICA

By Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

There is a saying that "Truth crushed to the earth will rise again." This is certainly the case now inside the apartheid regime in South Africa. After years of public denials by the government of South Africa that it secretly was funding Chief Buthelezi and his Inkatha organization to politically and violently oppose the African National Congress, the truth is now coming out, and it is "rising" to bring clarity to why the violence in South Africa is continuing.

It is as if South Africa used its own version of the United States counter-intelligence program, COINTELPRO, to foster and sponsor the enmity and destructive hatred of Inkatha toward the African National Congress. We mourn and are outraged at the thousands of innocent women, men, and children who have been killed as a direct result of the apartheid regime's sponsorship of terrorism.

State sponsored terrorism has now been exposed once again in South Africa. How can President Bush, who speaks so eloquently against terrorism, not move his "lip" to denounce the de Klerk administration in South Africa for its sponsorship of terrorism against the people of South Africa?

Of course, President de Klerk

was quick to defend the ultimate goal of this "political destabilization" in Africa because the United States had given similar financial support to groups like Inkatha in Nicaragua and in Angola. If there is to be a "New World Order," it should be a world free of this kind of arrogant and racist attempt to deny peoples of the world community the fundamental human right to self determination.

It is ironic that President Bush and President de Klerk are now calling for renewed sense of "confidence" in the apartheid regime's intentions to be fair. De Klerk confessed, "The government accepts that there has to be political confidence in respect to the sensitive issue of secret funding. It is a fact that this confidence has been shaken and it is necessary to restore it."

Political trust and confidence are not matters that can be reduced to rhetorical appeal. Yes, confession is good for the soul, yet the problem that remains in South Africa goes far beyond President de Klerk saying, "We did wrong, but now you can trust us." Today, Nelson Mandela and millions of Africans cannot even vote in government elections because of their race; but, this is the government that wants the majority of the people it has disenfranchised to "trust" it.

The anti-apartheid movement in the United States and throughout the world needs to call for justice for all of the victims of this diabolical scheme to stop democracy in South Africa.

TO BE EQUAL

CHILDREN'S NEEDS NEGLECTED

By John E. Jacob

A bipartisan commission appointed by the White House and the Congress recently recommended that parents get a \$1,000 federal income tax credit for every dependent child.

Low-income families without a tax liability would get a check from the government.

That would be a major step toward enabling low-income families to meet the basic needs of their children and changing America's shameful lack of concern about its children.

Our infants mortality rate is one of the highest in the developed world, and some of big cities have rates that are worse than many Third World nations.

Almost a fourth of all children under the age of six live in families below the poverty line, and nearly half of African American children and over a third of Hispanic children are poor.

Children are a third of America's 37 million people who

don't have medical insurance and have limited access to health care. A research study released in March said that one out of eight American children experiences hunger.

A couple of decades ago, when there was similar concern about high poverty among the elderly, Congress boosted social security payouts and poverty rates among older Americans nose-dived.

Today's poorest population group is children, and action to deal with child poverty and its devastating effects is long overdue.

The National Commission on Children's report should be the basis for an enlightened national children's policy like those implemented by other industrial nations.

In Europe, children's payments are routinely available to all families; health care is provided, and most young children are enrolled in state-funded preschool programs.

But in America, growing numbers of children suffer poverty, lack access to health care, and aren't prepared for school.

Today, only about half of poor pregnant women and infants get aid through nutrition programs; less than half of eligible children are enrolled in Head Start, and fewer get urgently needed social services.

You would think that government would at least mount a concentrated attack on infant mortality, but it hasn't.

Congress appropriated another \$25 million for programs aimed at reducing infant mortality, despite a White House study that recommended a nationwide program costing twenty times as much.

Meanwhile, Congress appropriated \$152 million to add 20,000 new rockets to the Army's stockpile of 300,000.

That defines the term: "misplaced priorities."

Government should realize that children's programs save a lot more than they cost — a dollar spent for children's health, nutrition, an preschool programs

should be brought to trail along with their sponsors for the countless massacres of innocent people. The transformation of South Africa is a monument to the degree to which the forces of

evil are entrenched in the international body politic. Racism is an international problem and as long as it is institutionalized in one nation, no one will be free anywhere.



JOHN E. JACOB

saves \$5-10 down the road in lower health care and other costs.

We need to implement a nationwide campaign to combat our shameful infant mortality rates, focusing on community-based prenatal care for poor pregnant women and nutrition programs for mothers and infants. A national health insurance program for children, along with establishment of neighborhood health clinics in poor areas, would increase access to health care.

The Commission's child payment plan would counter the effects of tighter welfare eligibility rules that exclude many of the poor and benefit payments below the levels needed for a minimum living standard.

To end child poverty, we need programs that bring job opportunities for their parents. And to expand opportunities for our young people, we need to put in place an array of developmental programs similar to those that work so well in other nations.

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